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TREE FARMING IN ILLINOIS

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State of Illinois

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

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DIVISION OF FORESTRY

This leaflet has been prepared by the Division of Forestry to acquaint Illinois citizens with the opportunities for profit to the individual and to the public at large, inherent in tree farming.

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

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WHY PLANT TIMBER CROPS?

1. Because forest tree seedlings quickly grow into money from successive sales of "thinnings" — posts, poles, Christmas trees, pulpwood, sawlogs, etc. Plantations under good management can produce 350 board feet of high-grade lumber per acre per year. This is new wealth accruing to the land owner, laborer and the State. It creates industries, jobs, and payrolls, and reduces the expenditure of public aid.

2. Because little labor, overhead, or expense is involved, relative to other crops. One acre can be planted with $16 to $20 worth of seedlings.

3. Because 2,500,000 acres of land in Illinois need reforesting . . . for they are better suited to timber-growing than to other crops or pasture.

4. Because forest cover stops destructive soil erosion on hills and siltation damage to bottom land crops. Clear cool streams, an abundance of aquatic life, and a high water table are the result.

5. Because the farm woodland and its border provide protection, nesting sites, winter cover, and food for wildlife. This desirable habitat increases the populations of insect-eating songbirds, game birds, game animals, and fur bearers.

6. Because municipal reservoirs and private lakes which have forest-covered watersheds are not troubled by siltation, filtration costs, and periodical replacement of million-dollar reservoirs.

7. Because field shelterbelts protect livestock from cold winds and snow in winter and crops from hot winds and drought in summer.

8. Because pine and hardwood plantations make for more pleasant living, improve the appearance and increase the sale value of most farms.

9. Because of the need for youth education, health, recreation, and beauty, it seems eminently practical for every city to have its community or town forest. The Community Forest is the common man's "North Woods." This opportunity is rapidly disappearing.

10. Because the Department aims to reduce floods by attempting to stop them at their source through reforestation. This also will create the by-products of ample game and fish, which the public wants.

KEEP CATTLE AND FIRE OUT OF WOODLANDS

I—THE NEED . . .

Food, clothing, shelter, water, life, and luxuries come from our land. But between 2 and 3 million acres, 7 per cent of the land in Illinois, no longer produce man's needs. After 100 years of misuse, they are worn out, idle, or cut raw with gullies. The sick land shown above was photographed in Schuyler county. Sick land can be found in every county.

Poor land can be put to work growing valuable timber crops. Knowing this, the Illinois Division of Forestry operates two large forest tree nurseries which produce 10,000,000 seedlings annually. The Mason Nursey, pictured here, is near Havana. The Union Nursery is near Jonesboro. Land owners may purchase these seedlings at small cost for reforestation and wildlife habitat planting on rural land.

II—PLANTING METHODS . . .

Many small, odd, or inaccessible areas, ought to be reforested. One man can usually hand plant 300 to 500 trees per day, depending on the type of soil and vegetation present. A planting bar, spade, shovel, or mattock is best for this type of planting. Small tree roots are delicate and will die quickly when dried by air, sun, wind and heat, so keep them moist at all times by the use of a pail holding wet moss, a wet burlap sack, or a thick slurry of mud and water.

Two men and a tree planting machine, powered by ordinary farm equipment, can plant 10,000 trees per day. Machines are best used on jobs involving 4 acres or more. At least 70 tree planters are in use in Illinois today and can be secured from the Department of Conservation, Soil Conservation Districts, sportsmen's clubs, etc. For information, contact your nearest District Forester.

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III—PLANTATION CARE . . .

Plantations must always be protected from fire if they are to survive and flourish. The use of firebreaks, both internal and external, provides good fire insurance and can save the life of any planting. Similarly, these areas must also be kept free of grazing livestock, destructive insects and diseases, and even over-populations of rodents and the like.

Control of weeds and other lush vegetation (especially in younger plantations) is a most important but frequently overlooked necessary practice. This can be done effectively with either pre- or post-emergent chemicals, all types of mechanical mowers, and cultivators. While it is best to secure this vegetative control before or during planting, it can also be achieved by using spacings which can accommodate available machinery.

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IV—CULTURAL OPERATIONS . . .

As young trees grow, they become too thick and a "thinning" is needed. While thinning times vary with different tree species, spacings, and even sites, two thinnings are normal for the lifetime of most plantations. A first thinning is possible about 15-20 years; the second thinning can occur between 40-50 years. The final harvesting is then possible about 80 years after planting.

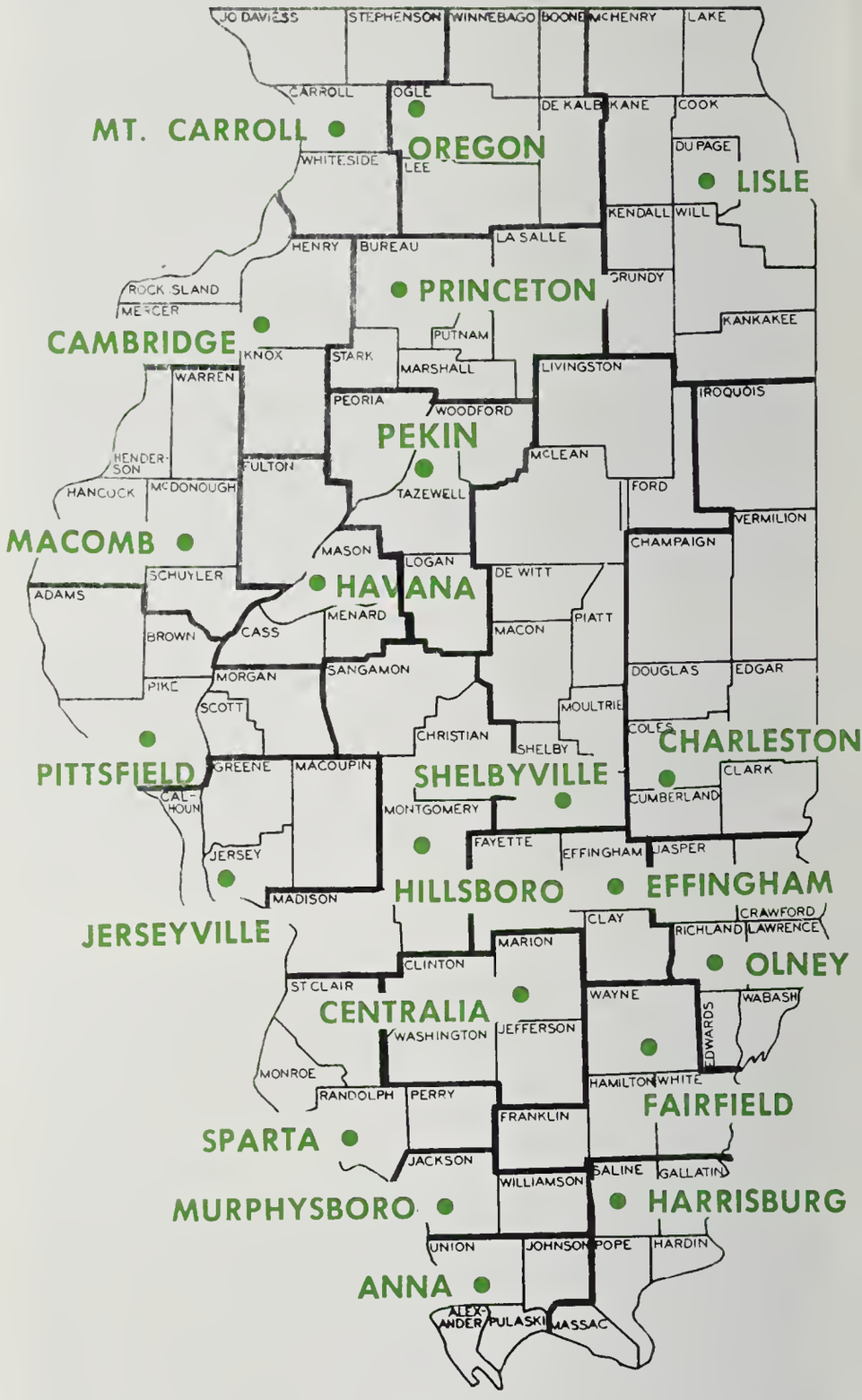
Quality is always important, especially when raising wood products. High grade trees and better prices can be secured by properly pruning (cutting) off bottom trunk branches and thereby developing sound, knot-free lumber. Pine prunings can quite frequently be used for Christmas boughs.

V—REWARDS . . .

Planted trees do produce good income! Illinois-grown Christmas trees, only 5-8 years after planting, have developed into a $2,000,000 yearly farm-land industry. Later thinnings for pulpwood, posts, poles, and the like bring in additional money while creating better residual trees. And, the final harvest of high-quality, good-priced sawlogs is a fitting conclusion to any reforestation project.

The "intangible" returns are equally good and important! Everyone nowadays appreciates, needs, and is often inspired by the beauty of trees and water, by the busy-bee antics of abundant wildlife, and by the pleasantness of a luxuriant, stable, forested landscape. Illinois, the Prairie State, needs many more areas like the above.

LOCATION OF DISTRICT FORESTERS



To obtain planting stock or forestry information, contact your nearest District Forester or your State Forester at Springfield, Illinois.

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